

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method of conveying articles, comprising the steps of feeding an article (5) to a pocket (35) of a conveyor (5) travelling along a given path (P); retaining said article (5) by gripping means (28, 29) associated with said pocket (35); feeding the article (5) along said path (P) in a given direction (D1) by means of said pocket (35) while the gripping means (28, 29) retain the article (5);

releasing said article (5) from said gripping means (28, 29) while the pocket (35) advances along the path (P); and

pushing the article (5) against a locating member (34) of said pocket (35) as said article (5) is advanced along the path (P) and as said article (5) is released from said gripping means (28, 29) in order to move the article (5) into contact with the locating member (34); and

retaining the article (5) by means of said gripping means (28, 29) once the article (5) rests against said locating member (34).

2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said locating member (34) is located downstream from the gripping means (28, 29) with respect to the feed direction (D1).

4. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 3, further comprising the step of pushing said article (5) against said locating member (34) by means of push means (45) located along said path (P).

5. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 4, wherein said push means are folding devices (45).

6. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 5, wherein said articles are blanks (5); each blank (5) comprising panels (11, 12, 13, 14, 15), tabs (16, 17, 18, 19, 20) and flaps (23, 25).

7. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 6, wherein the tabs (16, 17, 18, 19, 20) are bounded with respect to the panels (11, 12, 13, 14, 15) by first crease lines (21, 22), and the flaps (23, 25) are bounded with respect to the tabs (17, 18) by second crease lines (24, 26); said second crease lines (24, 26) being substantially parallel to the feed direction (D1).

8. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the blank (5) has a longitudinal axis (A); the method conveying each blank (5) with its longitudinal axis (A) crosswise to the feed direction (D1).

9. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 7, wherein said blank (5) comprises a first pair of flaps (23, 25) upstream with respect to the respective pocket (35), and a second pair of flaps (23, 25) downstream with respect to the pocket (35); the method folding the first pair of flaps (23, 25) by means of said folding devices (45) when said blank (5) is released from said gripping means (28, 29).

10. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 9, further comprising the step of folding the second pair of flaps (23, 25) by means of said folding devices (45) when the blank (5) is retained by said gripping means (28, 29).

11. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising the step of feeding each article (5) between the respective pocket (35) and a guide (6), located along a portion of the path (P), when said gripping means (28, 29) are deactivated.

12. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the conveyor comprising a said pocket (35) movable in a direction (D1) along a given path (P), said gripping means (28, 29) being associated with said pocket (35) to retain said article (5); said conveyor (5) further comprises folding devices (45) located along the path (P) and cooperating with said gripping means (28, 29) and with said locating member (34).

13. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 12, wherein said locating member (34) is located downstream with respect to the gripping means (28, 29).

14. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 13, wherein said locating member (34) comprises stop members (37) for said article (5).

15. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 12, wherein said folding devices (45) are rotary folding devices (45) selectively positioned contacting said article (5).

16. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 15, wherein said folding devices (45) rotate about an axis (44) perpendicular to said direction (D1).

17. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 16, wherein said articles are blanks (5); each blank (5) comprising panels (11, 12, 13, 14, 15), tabs (16, 17, 18, 19, 20) and flaps (23, 25); said folding devices (45) folding said flaps (23, 25) with respect to the rest of the blank (5); and said gripping means (28, 29) comprising a plate (28) and suction holes (29) for retaining one (13) of said panels (11, 12, 13, 14, 15).

18. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 17, wherein the tabs (16, 17, 18, 19, 20) are bounded with respect to the panels (11, 12, 13, 14, 15) by first crease lines (21, 22), and the flaps (23, 25) are bounded with respect to the tabs (17, 18) by second crease lines (24, 26); said pocket (35) retaining said blank (5) with said second crease lines (24, 26) substantially parallel to said direction (D1).

19. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 18, wherein said blank (5) comprises a first pair of flaps (23, 25) upstream with respect to the respective pocket (35), and a second pair of flaps (23, 25) downstream with respect to the pocket (35); each folding device (45) comprising a first lobe (46) for folding a flap in the first pair of flaps (23, 25), and a second lobe (46) for folding a flap in the second pair of flaps (23, 25).

20. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 12, wherein the conveyor (5) comprises a guide (6) located along a portion of the path (P).

21. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 20, wherein the conveyor (5) comprises a drum (2) rotating about an axis (3) of rotation and having a number of gripping members (4) equally spaced about the axis (3) of rotation; each gripping member (4) having a said pocket (35).

22. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 21, wherein said guide (6) comprises a face (39) facing said drum (2).

23. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 22, wherein said folding devices (45) are located between the guide (6) and the drum (2).

24. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 22, wherein said guide comprises first grooves (40) extending parallel to the path (P) along said face (39) and for housing the folded flaps (23, 25).

25. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 22, wherein said guide (6) comprises second grooves (41) extending parallel to the path (P) and for partly housing the locating member (34).